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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2016

Man enters playground

Child allegedly assaulted at school.
Page 2

Services grow

Anti-human trafficking action plan.
Page 8

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Happy harvest



ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

After several attempts, Ashley Ker, 11, manages to sink her teeth into an apple outside the Something Different store in Port Colborne, during the Downtown Business Improvement Area's Harvest Festival. See more on page 5.

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LOCAL NEWS

'The guy came through the fence'

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

They didn't believe her, at first.

The story the seven-year-old told her parents last Tuesday seemed too incredible to be true, especially without a letter from her school, DeWitt Carter in Port Colborne, confirming it.

"I said: 'OK Jess, what are you making up?'" Linda Estey said. "Why isn't there a note? What's going on?" Certainly, she thought, parents would be informed if a child had apparently been assaulted by a man who entered the playground while children were outside for morning recess.

And certainly, parents of the five children who were right there when it happened "have a right to know," she added.

Estey said her daughter returned home from school Sept. 27 and described watching helplessly as a man grabbed the arm of another child.

"The guy came through the fence, approached the girl and said something along the lines of, 'Come with me,'" Estey said.

The girl apparently replied: "No, I don't know you."

Estey said her daughter and all the children in the area "just stopped and froze," watching in disbelief.

Then the man allegedly grabbed the girl by the arm.

"She yelled at him: 'What are you doing? Let go!'"



ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Linda Estey stands at an opening in the fence at DeWitt Carter School in Port Colborne, where a man is alleged to have entered the schoolyard and assaulted a student last week.

that time, the (school) staff were right there," Estey said.

She said school staff "did an amazing job" bringing the man into the school and keeping him there until Niagara Regional Police arrived to arrest him.

She later learned the suspect was charged with assault of a person under the age of 16.

But at the time and with no confirmation from the school, Estey said all she could do was spend the

night wondering and worrying.

"I was a mess Tuesday night, because I didn't know. Is this true? Who was this guy? Is it a father? Who is it?"

She said she called the school the next morning and her fears were confirmed. The story her daughter told her was true.

Estey said staff told her they wanted to inform parents immediately, especially those of the five children who were directly involved.

She said she was told District School Board of Niagara's communications department prevented school faculty from doing so.

But in an interview, DSNB spokesman Brett Sweeney said "that's not the case."

He said the parents of the child directly involved were notified immediately, and visited the school that afternoon to speak with faculty.

"They were given all the details of what could be shared by the school," he said.

Sweeney said the school board defers to police when it's an active investigation.

"Because this was a police investigation, we do take our lead from the NRP," he said.

"If they feel that there's a need for community notification, then they'll issue a media release, and we always pass that on to parents."

He said "it's tough, sometimes, to know exactly who is in the area and who might have witnessed it," and it's difficult to compile a list of

students who might have been involved.

"Our staff member who intervened when this individual came onto the school property — obviously, their attention is entirely focused on intervening in that situation and protecting the safety of students. Sometimes it's not always possible to have a list of who was in the near vicinity or might have witnessed it."

Estey said that finally on Friday, a note was sent home informing parents about the incident.

Sweeney said the board waited until police issued a media release Thursday night before following up with the letter, including the information provided in the media release, while informing parents counsellors would be available for students who might have been emotionally impacted.

"If they're feeling fearful or anxious, we certainly want to provide support to them."

But Estey said her daughter could have benefited from counselling immediately afterward — not four days later.

"This was stuff that my daughter needed on Tuesday," she said.

Although Estey said she's relieved no one was hurt, she remains troubled about the delay in informing parents, and concerned it was allowed to happen at all.

And, she waits changes made so it can never happen again.

See FENCE on A15

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LOCAL NEWS



RAY SPITERI/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Falls residents Laura Birrell (left) and Fran McLaughlin have seen their hydro bill triple during the past couple of years.

'We don't know where to turn'

RAY SPITERI
Postmedia Network

Laura Birrell and Fran McLaughlin are overcome with fear when they see the mail carrier.

They're not afraid of the person delivering packages. They're horrified by what the cost of their new hydro bill might be.

Last Wednesday, fear turned to anger.

As the Niagara Falls residents were preparing to sit down with reporters and Ontario NDP Leader Andrea

Horwath and Niagara Falls NDP MPP Wayne Gates to discuss their skyrocketing hydro bills, Birrell and McLaughlin received their latest slip.

The total: \$677. Up from the \$372 they paid last month.

"We've been able to maintain bills, but now it's at a point where we don't know what to do, we don't know where to turn," said McLaughlin.

"We work hard to maintain our home because we are proud. We spend all of our time here. We don't go on vacations. We don't live an elaborate life. We just live to pay our bills,

and to be comfortable."

Birrell said they have a small, apartment-sized fridge downstairs, which they haven't used this year.

"We kept it unplugged. We had closed the vents off so the central air would focus more on the main unit where we live. We do our laundry off peak. We're trying to be responsible."

"This is my childhood home. We've entertained selling and moving out of province because the province is just going down the tubes."

See HYDRO on A30

Teeder's banner at home in Port



JOE CSEHI/SPECIAL TO THE POSTMEDIA NETWORK

The Maple Leafs' banner of (Ted) Teeder Kennedy, who played on the team from 1942 until 1957 including several years as captain, and who skated to five Stanley Cup championships, is retired by the Toronto team at Port Colborne's Vale Health and Wellness Centre. Once hanging at Air Canada Centre, it will be replaced with a new one this season. Pictured are, from left, Tom Lannan, former director of community services for the city and a relative of Kennedy, Teeder's son Mark Kennedy, Mayor John Maloney and Leafs mascot Carlton.

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Restaurants offer stress-free Thanksgiving

ROSS
MIDGLEY

Thanksgiving, like so many traditions that involve food and family, can have its share of laughter and of tears.

Most people I know can relate stories of Thanksgivings gone awfully awry — some that can be laughed off, others that can not.

The pressure of pulling off the perfect meal, resplendent with all of the trimmings, can have even the most seasoned cook hitting the Chardonnay early in the day. And one piece of professional advice here, that choice rarely makes for a better meal.

Large turkey producers like Butterball even have a hot-line that people can call for advice on cooking their bird. The most asked question? "Why does the house smell like burning plastic?" Somehow, without laughing, the advice to the caller has to be to "unwrap" the turkey first — no lie.

Even the cooks who have their Thanksgiving food preparations nailed down cannot foresee every potential pitfall.

I recall vividly one Thanksgiving at my in-laws



FILE PHOTO

(wine, yes, but not due to the meal prep stress). I had roasted the perfect turkey. Mahogany. Gorgeous. Rest-

ing for the requisite time to ensure even redistribution of the natural juices before carving. I thought I had

pushed the waiting roast far enough back on the counter, only to return to the kitchen to find my masterpiece half-

eaten by Rasta, my sister-in-law's Portuguese water dog. It turns out Rasta was both nimble and tasteful, baving

first devoured the dark meat most coveted in our family.

See **THANKSGIVING** on A6

I've been thinking about giving thanks

REV. THOMAS P. ARTH

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

As a child, some of the first prayers that I learned were table graces. My family never sat down to a meal without first giving thanks or asking God's blessing on the food we were about to eat.

I'm from a German family

so I learned them first in German.

A rough translation of these prayers into English would be, "God our Father bless this meal to our strength and to your praise. Amen."

The other was "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and bless what you have provided us. Amen."

My wife and I have taught our own kids the practice and tradition of praying before a meal. We used to say it tastes better after you pray. Our standard prayer goes, "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed. Blessed be God, who is our bread, may all the world be clothed and fed. Amen."

When we host a big family dinner, like at Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Easter, my wife always wants me to come up with something a little more elaborate. I can sometimes be a little lazy, so I'd be happy with the simple, memorized, rhyming prayer we always say, but I can also see her point. Sometimes, in

an effort to get down to eating something we're particularly looking forward to, we'll rattle off our standard prayer so quickly that someone who didn't know what we were saying wouldn't understand what we'd just said. And we're so used to saying those same words every day, at every meal, that we don't even think

about what we're saying.

But there's something to be said for familiarity too. It doesn't always breed contempt, as the proverb tries to convince us. In fact, in a relationship familiarity opens the way to greater love and intimacy.

See **RELIGION** on A6

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Harvest Fest a celebration of fall

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

There aren't many small cities that have downtown districts that are as busy as Port Colborne's.

"We have a vibrant downtown," said Betty Konec, chair of the city's Downtown Business Improvement Association. "It's taken 31 years to get most of these storefronts full, and I can't think of many empty ones."

A few blocks of Clarence Street running through the downtown core were closed to traffic last Saturday to fill the pavement with entertainment, vendor booths and people celebrating the fall season, while giving the owners of the shops a chance to showcase their businesses.

The BIA's annual Harvest

Festival included "a really fun kid's area" at St. George Park, bobbing for apples, a hay ride along West Street and activities at the Port Colborne museum a few blocks away such as a scavenger hunt and a pie contest.

Downtown restaurants and retailers also each created scarecrows to decorate their shops, and Harvest Fest visitors were asked to select their favourites.

"There's a fair bit of stuff going on," she said. "It's a fun day. We're hoping people come out and enjoy it and go into the stores. That's the whole purpose to get people to recognize that we have a really good variety of downtown stores. You can get pretty much everything you need here in downtown Port Colborne."

This year, however, much

of the downtown was a construction zone with major renovations underway at several buildings.

Some of the storefront renovations are expected to be complete by the end of October, and when it's done "it's going to definitely spruce up the street."

Property owners are "investing some dollars in the downtown."

Harvest Fest has its roots in an event dating back more than a decade, but Konec said it has evolved since it was first established.

"It's taken on different iterations," she said.

Ultimately, the event is intended to encourage people to come downtown.

"And that's what the BIA is all about," Konec said.

ABenner@postmedia.com



ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Ryker and Kaylynn Minor are among dozens of children who enjoyed the kid's area set up as part of the Downtown Business Improvement Area's Harvest Festival in Port Colborne.


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Save Thanksgiving misfires

THANKSGIVING from A4

I had grown up experiencing other Thanksgiving misfires, too.

My mother, who really had no time for the kitchen and cooking, nonetheless pulled off beautiful meals on the holidays. I grew up in a family of six and my mom would distribute the jobs among us, in order to spend her time behind the stove.

My dad was always left with the job of whipping the

potatoes and carving the bird. When the hour arrived to do the carving, however, my dad's pager would sound and he would be off to the hospital, leaving me to hack at the turkey. The frequency of this occurrence left us all a little suspicious, and caused me to approach turkey differently.

Now every Thanksgiving, whether I am preparing a meal for my family or for guests at the restaurant, I de-bone it first and

wrap it around stuffing as a 'roulade'. The turkey stays beautifully moist this way, and everyone gets a little mix of white and dark meat so there are no squabbles at the table. Best of all, anyone can be left to carve without any skill needed at all.

Many families today are eschewing these logistical struggles of Thanksgiving meal preparation by booking their holiday feast at a restaurant. Gone are the hours spent

in the kitchen, with sometime inconsistent results, the dishes to do, the cunning pets. Thanksgiving can be easy and stress-free. And as a chef running a restaurant I can tell you I will be giving thanks for your reservation.

Ross Midgley moved from P.E.I. to Niagara in 1999. Since then he has held the lead position in several of the region's top kitchens. He is passionate about his family, all things Niagara and good rock 'n' roll. He can be reached at chetmidgley1968@gmail.com.

Make gratitude part of life and bring positivity

RELIGION from A4

In our relationship with God that can also be the case. The prayers we know by heart, like a table grace, or the Lord's Prayer, or the Gloria (Glory to God) or Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) that we sing in the worship service or mass become familiar to us, teach us something, and bring us into a loving and intimate relationship with our creator and Lord.

Research has shown gratitude creates positive emotions like joy, love, and contentment which in turn undo the grip of negative emotions like anxiety. When we're thankful for what we have it can keep us from wanting more and more — we become happier and more satisfied.

Often families go through the forced exercise at their Thanksgiving dinner of going around the table and telling something they're thankful for. There's nothing wrong with that, but I've found that you either end up with the cliché answers or you get silly answers. There's nothing wrong with that either.

But maybe Thanksgiving can become a day when we start a daily exercise of giving

thanks. Think of all that you have and all that you are. All of it is ultimately a gift from God. Giving thanks to God for all that we have been given is a way to grow in our relationship with God and can lead to greater joy, love, contentment, happiness, and satisfaction in our lives.

Some people keep a gratitude journal, making a point of listing some things that come to mind each day for which they are thankful. You might give that a try. Or maybe after you've rushed through a familiar table grace to get to your meal you might pause at the end of the meal and bring to your mind some of the things you're thankful for.

A number of the Psalms in the Bible start with the verse, "O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever."

The people of God have made gratitude and thanksgiving part of their lives and worship for millennia. If it isn't already, you can visit a church this Thanksgiving and begin to make it a regular part of your life as well.

Happy Thanksgiving.



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LOCAL NEWS

City wants marijuana farm licences revoked

ALLAN BENNER
and LAURA BARTON
Postmedia Network

Port Colborne will ask Health Canada to revoke licences to grow medical marijuana at a greenhouse on Pinecrest Road, in the wake of an armed robbery there two weeks ago when two people were held at gunpoint.

Niagara Regional Police reported that while searching the property, officers found 3,400 plants growing in the greenhouse.

That's about 3,000 plants — worth \$1.5 million — more than the licence was permitted to produce through the three licences it was operating under.

Port Colborne Mayor John Maloney feels that should be grounds for Health Canada to revoke the licences.

"We're certainly advocating that their permission for growing the substance should be revoked, and end of story. That's what we're pressing the minister for, as well as Parliament," Maloney said in an interview last Tuesday.

At last Monday's Port Colborne city council meeting, Ward 4 Coun. Ron Bodner asked staff to look at ways to prevent the same sort of problems from occurring in the future.

Bodner called the robbery a "traumatic event," and a "big deal" for the usually quiet rural neighbourhood. "My friends and neighbours out there had six armed police officers running across their deck very early in the morning. You know, it looked like a movie set if it wasn't happening right on your property," he said.

"It was pretty damn scary for a lot of people."

Bodner said the report should look into ways to ensure problems of that type do not happen again.

"I know everyone is limited to what they can do, but this is a time when this is front and centre, it's highlighted," he said. "We don't want this in our community. People with guns, robbing

this place. It's just totally not acceptable... We need to know if we have any, any control over this."

He said he has heard the facility — formerly operated as Mulebone Greenhouses, a business that grew cucumbers and tomatoes — has since been cleaned out and is dark. He hopes to learn through the city report if it will be permitted to reopen.

Councillors also heard from resident Kerry Fallon, whose Firelane 2 property abuts the greenhouse site.

Fallon urged council to send a message to Health Canada, because if we don't get this medical marijuana under control, how are we ever going to deal with recreational marijuana?

"It's not a problem for this. This is a problem with our municipality, our region, Ontario, Canada. These renegades are under licences that are grandfathered," he said, while crediting emergency workers for their prompt response that led to the arrest of five of 10 suspects involved in the heist.

Although police reported two weeks ago that more arrests were pending, Const. Virginia Moir said last Tuesday that no new information is being released at this time due to concerns about compromising the investigation.

In the wake of the robbery, *The Tribune* asked Health Canada about regulations for medical marijuana production, such as how frequently sites are inspected and security system requirements.

Although those questions went unanswered, Health Canada media relations officer André Gagnon responded with an e-mail last Monday saying registered or licensed growers "must abide by the law."

"This means that they must respect their established plant, storage and possession limits at all times. These limits are all tied to the individual's medical need for cannabis" as prescribed by a health-care practitioner, Gagnon wrote.

"Individuals are only

We're certainly advocating that their permission for growing the substance should be revoked, and end of story. That's what we're pressing the minister for, as well as Parliament."

Port Colborne Mayor John Maloney

authorized to produce and possess for their own medical purposes, and it is illegal for them to share or provide or sell what they have produced to anyone else."

Growers also "need to comply with all relevant provincial/territorial and municipal laws, including local bylaws about zoning, electrical and fire safety as well as all related inspection

and remediation requirements," he wrote.

To assist police, Health Canada provides a dedicated 24/7 phone line allowing officers to confirm specific individuals are authorized to possess or produce limited amounts of cannabis for medical purposes.

Maloney said the City of Port Colborne has also been trying to obtain information

from Health Canada about the oversight of licensed marijuana production facilities, like the greenhouse on Pinecrest Road.

"We assumed, as most people did, that they are regulated in some way," Maloney said.

"The question is, how often? Nobody is giving us that answer."

He said Niagara Centre MP Vance Badway is assisting the city in its efforts, but "the more we get into this the murkier it becomes."

In his e-mail, Gagnon said Health Canada has taken measures to keep Canadians informed about the rules and responsibilities regarding medical marijuana, including posting guidelines at the healthcanadagc.ca website.

One of the guidelines reads: "You may want to consider installing strong locks on the doors to all areas where you produce

or store cannabis and/or installing a home monitoring or alarm system."

Maloney laughed about the wording of that guideline. "It's crazy," he said. "Rather than advising people they 'may want to consider' installing security devices, Maloney said 'it should be a direct regulation and restriction, so this type of situation doesn't happen'."

He said it's apparent that regulations concerning medical marijuana need to be strengthened.

For now, he said, Port Colborne wants "the right for these individuals to grow this product terminated."

Police reported two weeks ago that although five suspects were arrested following the robbery, they believe five more are still at large and could be armed.

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LOCAL NEWS



JULIE JOCSAN/POST-MEDIA NETWORK

Krystal Snider, skills development co-ordinator is photographed in front of the YWCA building on King Street in St. Catharines. YWCA Niagara Region and Niagara Sexual Assault Centre is receiving a \$25,000 grant to examine the issue of human trafficking in Niagara.

Services grow for exploited women

CHERYL CLOCK
Postmedia Network

When a victim of human trafficking asks for help in Niagara, she will likely find services that are disconnected, and not tailored to her specific needs.

While intentions are good, organizations can lack the knowledge or tools to help women stay free from the sexual exploitation that has dominated their lives, and to eventually heal themselves, says Krystal Snider, skills development co-ordinator at YWCA Niagara Region.

She is working to change that.

The YWCA, in partnership with the Niagara Sexual Assault Centre, has received a \$25,000 grant from the Canadian Woman's Foundation to

develop an anti-human trafficking action plan for Niagara.

The goal is to make it easier for victims to access a multitude of supports seamlessly, she says.

Services need to be better co-ordinated, so that everyone knows what everyone else is doing. And gaps need to be identified, she says.

Work begins with a forum in November, that will bring together every group and person in the region who works with victims. Think Niagara Regional Police, Victim Services Niagara, the Niagara Health System, and more.

One unknown that needs to be better understood, is the pervasiveness of trafficking in the region, she says. It's known that Niagara is a hotspot, due to the variety of strip clubs and

massage parlours and its proximity to the U.S.

In Canada, most trafficking is domestic, typically in a corridor that includes Niagara, Hamilton, Toronto, Windsor and Montreal, she says.

Not all sex trade workers are victims of human trafficking, and it does not always involve moving women across provinces, she says.

Instead, what distinguishes the two is exploitation. Trafficked victims are oppressed by typically male pimps who control everything in the woman's life — their money, the frequency of jobs, Johns, type of sex acts the women are forced to perform — usually under the threat of physical violence and psychological domination, she says.

See TRAFFICKING on A12

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Soaring hydro rates leave residents in tatters

HYDRO from A3

They have a small outdoor pool, which they closed.

"There isn't any disposable income for us at this point. We can't even conserve as much as we can. We try not to run the air conditioning too much, and we have switched our dryer to run on gas instead of hydro, but now even the price of gas is going up," said Birrell.

"It's putting a lot of strain on us financially, but also emotionally. We are always stressed about paying the bills."

Birrell said she went to Gates' constituency office after receiving the \$372 hydro bill. She said Gates, who has been a vocal critic of the provincial government's handling of the hydro file and who recently invited people to talk to him about their hydro bills, was "fabulous and listened with empathy."

"I'm just one in I don't know how many people who are going through the same thing," said Birrell, adding they don't have children.

She said she went to Project Share to learn about a program that might be able to offset some of their monthly costs, but didn't feel it was enough.

Birrell said they then went to Niagara Peninsula Energy for advice. "Hydro had said, 'You have an excellent payment history,' and I said, 'Well, that's about to change at this rate.'"

"So (a hydro employee) said, 'Why don't we put you on what's called an Arrears Management Program,' which would basically take that \$372 and over a 10-month period of time, and tack it on to our other bills going forward."

"Ironically enough, the mail lady just left 10 minutes ago. Fran opened up our bill, and we're looking at a \$677 hydro bill now — that's with the



It's putting a lot of strain on us financially, but also emotionally. We are always stressed about paying the bills."

Niagara Falls resident Laura Birrell

Arrears Management Program."

Gates said he often hears stories similar to Birrell's and McLaughlin's from other constituents who have never been behind on a bill before.

"I hear's close to 6,000 people in my

riding alone that are behind on their bill," he said.

"They don't want to go to Project Share. They don't want to go to the hydro and talk to the nice lady at the desk that's saying, 'well we can try and do a payment plan.' No, I've been able to pay my hydro bill my entire life."

Gates said when Birrell came into his office, "we both broke down because she was just so upset that she couldn't pay her bill."

"In a province as rich as Ontario, this should never happen," he said.

"It shouldn't happen to families, shouldn't happen to young families, shouldn't happen to seniors."

He said the Liberal government is not doing enough to take the burden off ratepayers. In fact, said Gates, they are making matters worse by continuing to sell off of Hydro One, "which will drive rates even further up."

Horwath said she, too, has been listening to people like Birrell and McLaughlin, and has put forward solutions to address the immediate needs of Ontarians who are "finding it harder and harder to build a good life in our province."

She credited the Niagara Falls residents for sharing their story and putting a "face to the struggles that everybody is feeling."

Horwath said Birrell's and McLaughlin's hydro bill has tripled during the past couple of years, but instead of permanently taking the HST off hydro, the government is proposing a temporary rebate that they can't count on, and refuses to stop the sell off of Hydro One.

Horwath said the NDP had called for the immediate and permanent

removal of HST from hydro bills, and continues to push the government to stop its "wrong-headed" sell-off.

"The hydro system in this province has been systematically privatized by consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments," she said.

"We have a government that is following the same failed path as the government that came before them. When you look at Quebec, and you look at Manitoba — I call them our book-end provinces — they are both charging rates that are less than half of what we're charging."

Horwath said the peak rates in Ontario have increased 50 per cent since Kathleen Wynne became premier in 2013.

"People are feeling like we're hitting a tipping point, like we're hitting a wall," she said.

St. Catharines Liberal MPP Jim Bradley could not be reached for comment. Earlier last week, the government announced it will be giving hydro ratepayers a \$2.45 rebate on their bills every month by halving the purchase of \$3.8 billion in large renewable-energy projects.

Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said a new Independent Electricity System Operator report showed the province will have a steady supply for the next decade, so the change makes sense.

Tossing the toonie and change back to consumers adds up when combined with the government's recent move to slash HST from hydro bills, he said.

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'Women feel like they can't leave'

TRAFFICKING from A8

"Victims of trafficking have experienced a tremendous amount of trauma," says Snider. "Women might be forced to see 12 men a day. What does that do to you psychologically? And what does that do to your physical body?"

Their needs are complex. It takes an average of seven attempts for her to leave a trafficker, she says.

Women are recruited using methods that are both insidious and cleverly psychological, often leaving women thinking it's their own choice, she says.

A woman might have a pimp who is like a Romeo, who befriends you and becomes your boyfriend," says Snider.

"Someone you really, really care about."

Eventually, the conversation deviates into a suggestion that the women might consider seeing a client "so we can have some more money," says Snider.

She's feeling like she chose to do this," she says.

"They feel like this is their boy-

friend, and this is their choice."

They don't understand that had they refused, the outcome would likely have been violence, she says.

"Over a period of time, it gets more violent, and women are psychologically beaten down by traffickers."

Women become dependant and vulnerable. They believe the lies told by the traffickers: no one else loves you, you don't have anywhere else to go, your women friends will be harmed if you leave.

"Women feel like they can't leave," says Snider.

Other times, women recruit other women.

On occasion, women have entered the YWCA's emergency shelter to entice female residents with nice clothes and promises of money. "I know this guy. He'll hook you up with some clients," they might say. Victims recruiting victims.

Shelter staff are trained to recognize this covert headhunting and stop it immediately, she says.

An action plan will encompass

every possible entry point, places where a victim would ask for help.

The ability to accurately identify them as trafficked victims is essential. If a woman doesn't realize what's happening to her, she could be misidentified as a victim of domestic violence, and then offered services that don't meet her needs and further isolate her, says Snider.

She leads a YWCA drop-in program called Sex Trade on My Terms which gives women a safe, weekly refuge. Many sex trade workers who have attended the program report being trafficked at some point in their lives, says Snider. Often women are finally dropped by traffickers when they become too old, or their addictions become so severe they are not marketable, she says.

Victims also need a quick response, not wait lists for counselling, and long-term programs instead of services that end before a woman feels safe enough to share her experiences, she says.

"Our goal is if a victim enters at any part of the system, we will enter at how to respond."

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Playground fence opening a cause for discussion

FENCE FROM A2

For instance, she said, the suspect apparently entered the schoolyard through an opening at the south-east corner of the fenced-off property, off Davis Street.

A tree growing beside that opening is easily large enough to hide someone, and she wants a gate added to ensure the safety of students.

Sweeney said the opening in the fence "is set back in the yard, and students when they're out on their nutrition break don't play anywhere near that area, because then it would make for difficult sight lines for staff to maintain supervision."

"I know there have been some discussions about that (opening) over time, but I don't know exactly how long," he said. "We haven't had a request for a gate. But that's something that we'll look into as a possibility."

Sweeney said the fence opening also serves as an exit for students and staff if the building needs to be evacuated.

"Being able to get out in the event of an emergency is important, so we want to look at all the factors associated," he said. "We don't want to create a problem where students aren't able to evacuate if necessary. But obviously safety is very important,

so that's something we will look at." Dave Schaubel, DSRN trustee for Fort Erie and Port Colborne, said "the safety of the kids is certainly the No. 1 priority, so I can't imagine that that would be a difficulty."

While he has not looked into the feasibility of installing a gate there, he said he's "certainly in favour of anything we can do to make the playground safer for our kids."

Despite using that area for emergency evacuation, Schaubel said "I can imagine there would be ways around that."

"If it's a safety issue, (the school board) will take care of it."

The police statement indicated the same man suspected in the incident at DeWitt Carter was also accused of assaulting a woman in the area of Bell and Davis streets nearly a week earlier, on Sept. 21.

Police have not identified the woman, who was walking her five-year-old child to the school on that Wednesday morning.

Estey maintains if the suspect had been arrested then, the alleged assault at the school likely would not have happened.

NRP Const. Phil Gavin, however, said it was the incident at the school that provided the evidence police needed to lay charges for the earlier sexual assault.

Gavin said police continued investigating the alleged sexual assault until the second incident occurred at the school, and the suspect was arrested at the scene.

"The further investigation by sexual assault unit was able to positively identify the male as being involved in the first incident," he said in an e-mail.

Sweeney said the school did issue a letter to parents following the alleged sexual assault on Sept. 21.

"A letter went home that day on the 21st. It's a fairly simple letter that says we've had a report of an incident in front of our school," he said.

The letter said police are investigating, "and if based on their investigation they feel there's need for greater community notification, they will provide that information and we will send it along to parents."

John Farrell, 47, of Port Colborne was charged with sexual assault related to the Sept. 21 incident, as well as assault of a person under the age of 16, related to the Sept. 27 incident.

He remains in custody pending a bail hearing this Friday in St. Catharines.

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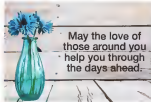
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BANCER, Jacob Douglas - Some people come into our lives and leave footprints on our hearts and we are never the same. With broken hearts we announce the sudden passing of Jacob on Friday September 30, 2016 at the age of 24. Beloved son of Lori (Bancer) and Dennis Verreault; amazing brother to Jeremy Bancer and D.J. Verreault and trusted friend to so many. A special heartfelt thank you to his best friend Ryan Johnson and his entire family for their kindness and loving support. Jacob will be remembered by his grandparents Jack and Sue Bancer, Clemence Levesque and Edmond Verreault; David Crooks, many aunts, uncles and cousins. Jacob was a graduate of Lakeshore Catholic High School and the University of Toronto. He was also a dedicated employee of Tim Hortons Canada for many years. We are so grateful to Tim Hortons for their ongoing love and support during this difficult time. Words could never express our gratitude for their kindness. As a parent no one can ever imagine having to bury their child. There are no words to do justice to the unspeakable grief. As his mom I can say that Jacob was an amazing young man and it was an honor and a privilege to call him my son. Although he is physically gone he will live on forever in our hearts. Cremation has taken place. The family will receive friends at **MORSE & SON FUNERAL HOME**, 5917 Main Street, Niagara Falls, Tuesday October 11 from 2-4 and 7-9 p.m. Vigil will be held at 3:30 p.m. Memorial Mass will be celebrated Wednesday October 12 at 11 a.m. at St. Michael's Church, 310 Central Avenue, Fort Erie. Rite of Committal will follow at St. Paul's Anglican Church Cemetery in memory of Jacob, donations may be made to Tim Hortons Children's Foundation. Memorials, photos and condolences may be shared at www.morseandson.ca

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design delivers superior
traction. 11-2263-0
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